

PROTESTS, RIOTS & RUMORS OF WAR: FROM NUR SULTAN TO KYIV & BACK TO ALMATY

In the very week that President Biden ordered all Americans out of Ukraine, I received my Ukrainian residency after a three month operation that finally came to a close. I first had to travel to Nur Sultan, (picture below is of large mosque there) the relatively new capital of Kazakhstan, so I could request the Ukrainian embassy to start the process with an approved visa. Previously, there was an Ukrainian consulate in Almaty, which I assumed was still in operation that would have made this all relatively easy, but thanks to the virus madness, it was closed. I did not find this out until after we arrived in Almaty. Furthermore, because of quarantine barriers at the time, neither was I allowed to travel to Nur Sultan either for all practical purposes. Yet Kazakhstan finally relaxed some of their restrictions, which then allowed me to travel to the Ukraine embassy in Nur Sultan in mid November. Once that was taken care of, I then traveled to Ukraine for the holiday season in order to complete the residency process. One must stay in Ukraine for at least 15 days after the application papers are turned in. Since I was going to be in Ukraine for a month and a half through the Christmas holidays, this was not foreseen to be a problem.



Yet, unbeknownst to me, there was a problem. Worse, this problem was not discovered until a week before I was scheduled to return to Almaty - all at the same time when riots and protests in Kazakhstan dominated the news cycle for a couple of weeks just after the New Year. The Immigration office in Ukraine rejected my application on Christmas Eve, but no one contacted me. Immigration also sent someone out to our townhouse, but no one was there, and so they had another reason to reject my residency. Even worse, the group I hired to assist me turn in my application did not give to Immigration copies of my documents proving the ownership of our townhouse was mine – which would have made Immigration's

visit unnecessary in the first place! Since I did not hear anything from anyone, I went to passport services to ask what was going on, but they did not know either. Part of the problem was the holiday season. At any rate, knowledge of my rejection was not discovered until January 10th, which created any number of problems in my heavy teaching schedule for that week as I had to spend quite some time going back and forth to Immigration trying to sort out the problem. After walking in and out of virtually every door at Immigration, sometimes visiting the same offices two or three times in a mazed circle of sorts, we got to know each other. Such firsthand knowledge, coupled with much prayer, finally led to my residency approval – but only after I had returned to Almaty. Yet, the residency is granted waiting for my return to pick up. We are thus so thankful to get this done in spite of some of the hurdles.

Such things are already trouble in and of itself, but when you add the virus madness on top of it all, it gets very chaotic very quickly. Protest, riots, revolutions, and rumors of war only add more fuel to the fire. Ukraine has been staring at the barrel of the Russian gun now since 2014. 13,000 Ukrainians have died in the Donbass battle zone since that time. We do not know what will happen to Ukraine tomorrow, but it seems the primary motive of the buildup may be more for the sake of intimidation than an actual serious invasion? Time will tell. However, thanks to the evacuation of all the Americans coupled with the Biden administration's virtual egging on of the Russians to come on into Ukraine, it is hard to say what may or may not happen at this very volatile time. Indeed, the very name "Ukraine" means borderland, and its oft-tragic history reflects this geographical and political fact.

By the time we finally returned to Kazakhstan, Almaty had already quieted down. Caren was unable to travel back to her work as originally scheduled since much of the country at that time was still being rocked here and there with serious protests, particularly in Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan. Schools were cancelled. The internet was shut down. According to Kazakhs I have spoken with here, thousands of protestors and dozens of police forces were killed. However, after Almaty quieted down, Caren was able to reschedule her flight to fly back with me. We then arrived a few days before the curfews were lifted. Military personnel were guarding the airport when we walked out the door.

The Almaty Airport was seized by protestors at the beginning of the unrest, but then re-taken by the Russian army. Kazakhstan's own security forces and police were quickly overrun during the initial stages of the protests, but the Russian military came in to help quell the uprising. Russia has any number of critical military installations in Kazakhstan that it cannot afford to lose. While it is certainly very true the corruption of the Kazakh oligarchs, a very serious hangover left over from the former Soviet Union, is at the very heart of the uprisings, it is also no less true, unbeknownst to locals around here, that Biden's green policies and its worldwide associated skyrocketing energy prices were just as much as the culprit. Energy prices in Kazakhstan doubled overnight, which helped spark the uprising. Contradictorily, Kazakhstan is energy rich. Gas and oil prices here should be relatively low.



A year ago, America was the largest energy producer in the world, which not only kept oil prices down, but also kept our enemies at bay. Now thanks to the foolish and false ascetic policies of the Euro-American green movement, this is now no longer the case. Even more suicidal, Europe is now at the mercy of Russian gas and oil, and our own government is back to the madness of begging OPEC to increase supply all over again. Gerhard Shroeder, the former chancellor of Germany, is on Russia's oil giant Gazprom's board. He has been deeply involved in the Nord Stream pipeline. Do the math.



BEFORE CHRISTMAS: FROM KYIV TO BARYSHIVKA TO DNIPRO TO LVIV

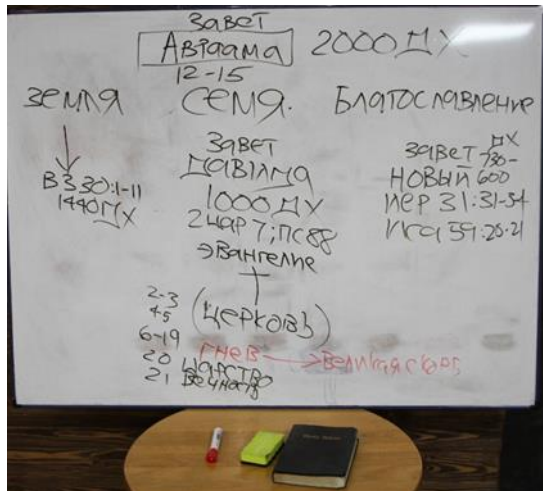
I arrived in Kyiv in early December to apply for my reidency, but immediately returned to our regular ministries in Kyiv and Baryshivka established over the years. At the Regeneration Church in Kyiv, we finally finished the big discussion about supernatural spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church in chapter 14 before beginning chapter 15 on the resurrection. The pastor of Regneration Church in Kyiv is Roman Ovcharenko. He was one of my former students in Kyiv Theological Seminary where I taught for three years in 1998-2001 before we helped establish the Word of God Bible College in Kyiv with Jim Myers. I had lost contact with Roman for a number of years, but when he saw and heard what we were doing with our DM2 ministries all over Ukraine, he got in contact with me again after all these years. Since that time, we have been able to teach DM2's Romans 1-8, Proverbs, and then 1st Corinthians regularly when I am in town – usually for 2-4 hours each week. At the same time on Wednesday evenings, we also continued Proverbs 17-24 in Baryshivka where Zhenya Safchenko is the pastor. Zhenya was our very first graduate from the Bible college in Kyiv. Pastor Vasya Munko, also among the firstfruits of our Bible college in Kyiv, joined us to help us teach Proverbs 17-24. Vasya Munko is the pastor of Lviv Bible Church in Lviv.



On the first weekend following my arrival, I was privileged to be invited to a brand new, but blossoming ministry in Dnipro. Sitting on the same Dneiper River south of Kyiv about 5-6 hours by car, Dnipro used to be known as Dnipropetrovsk during Soviet times. Dnipropetrovsk was, and still is to some extent even today, a very serious industrial town. Compared to much of Ukraine, it certainly has the industrial look



and feel when you arrive and stay there for a few days, yet with an old Soviet twist. Dnipro also has a very sizable Jewish community within its districts as well. I enjoyed staying at the Menorah Hotel, which is located in a very large office building area which represents most of the Jewish business being practiced in Dnipro today. Unsurprisingly, Dnipro thus has serious political clout as well. President Kuchma, the second president of Ukraine, was from Dnipropetrovsk. In Soviet times, he was in charge of a huge rocket factory of many acres that is no longer in operation. President Zelensky, the current president and a former actor, is also from the Dnipro area.



There are two Evangelical Free churches (Word of Life & Morning Star) on both sides of the Dnieper River which are also connected to a small Bible institute which meets on Saturdays for eight hours once or twice a month. These churches were established a number of years ago by Evangelical Free missionaries. They left a number of years ago after their evangelistic/discipleship work was completed. As these churches have grown spiritually, their biblical and theological interests have also grown, and they are now actively very interested in Dispensational teaching with no small thanks to Dr. Andy Woods. Pastor Andrei Chikalov of Word of Life church has been deeply involved in the Evangelical Free ministry in Dnipro for many years now. His English is superb, and he is becoming increasingly disturbed by the liberal-left drifting of the Evangelical Free Church in Canada and America. It was over such concerns that Andrei found Dr. Andy Woods's teaching, which has opened up a whole new theological world he had heard about, but never understood what it really was – until recently.

Part of this change of heart most certainly goes back to one of our former graduates from the Bible college in Kyiv named Lena who married an American named Paul Miles. Paul taught a class on Dispensations a few years ago at their Bible institute. This got the wheels turning. Another big part was played by Taras and Lena Ostapenko (pictured above right). We have known Taras and Lena for many years. They were deeply involved in the church in Baryshivka. Taras is a personal friend of Pastor Zhenya Safchenko. Taras even attended the Bible college in Kyiv for a year before he married Lena. Five years ago, Taras then moved his family to Dnipro because of work. Taras has really grown spiritually over the last number of years, and has had a very good and patient testimony at the Evangelical Free churches in Dnipro since they moved there. Taras has been endorsing our ministry in Kyiv for a number of years now, and that testimony is now starting to pay off spiritual dividends in a big way.

Both churches got together and asked me to teach the book of Revelation. I thus went to Dnipro and spent more than 10 hours teaching Revelation 1-5. I focused primarily on the relationship between biblical history, covenants, and prophecy which is at the very heart of understanding God's prophetic time calendar. Covenants are the historical foundations of prophecy. Prophecies are the superstructure(s) built upon those covenant foundations. All too many sadly speak of prophecy without covenants, which then invariably becomes an impenetrable swamp of current news mixed in with mysticism, and worse still, usually becomes infiltrated with Anti-Semitism.

KYIV BIBLE COLLEGE BEFORE/DURING/AFTER HOLIDAYS: BIBLICAL FAMILY & HEBREWS

After I returned back from Dnipro, not only did Caren join me from Almaty for the Christmas holiday season, but I began teaching a two-week module on Biblical Family at the Bible college in Kyiv. By the gracious power of God's wise word offered by faith, we spent much time talking about the critical importance of a man's role in any godly family. It is not true that women or wives are experts on the family. This is an all-too common presumption on both sides, and desperately needs to be corrected even in our churches, let alone in the outside world. Much of the madness our present world is currently suffering through is largely because men have become spiritually AWOL in their families. They are lazy and undisciplined in this area, which invariably leads to abuse and extreme counter measures to correct the abuse. Our social and political problems being experienced everywhere these days ultimately have their roots in spiritual problems at home. It is too easy to blame media, society, and politics.



During the weekdays I was teaching at the Bible college, but on some of the weeknights we were traveling to Baryshivka and to another area of Kyiv to continue Proverbs and 1st Corinthians respectively – all the while occasionally going back and forth to Irpin to overlook the construction going on at our townhouse there. On the weekend before Christmas, we then traveled to Lviv as we also taught Proverbs 17-24 there, which was attended by three different churches in the area. We are so happy and blessed to have a good ministry in Lviv now these days. Pastor Vasya Munko has been faithful there for many years now. His tenacity, together with our very effective DM2 Bible workshops over the last number of years, has broken some hard ground in western Ukraine – an area which is very Catholic. Even better, two of our



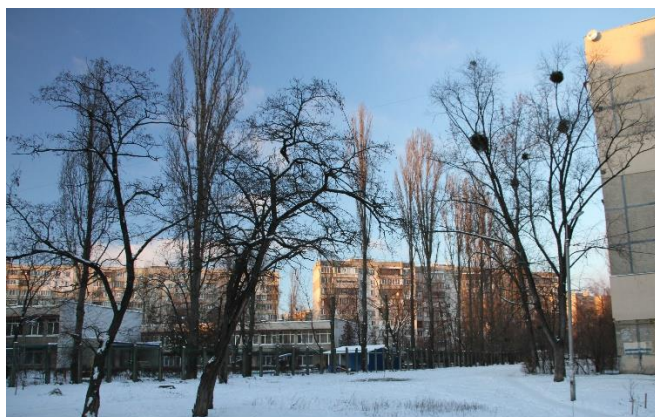
former graduates, Oleg Gatsenko and Yuri Chugai (pictured respectively on the previous page on the bottom), helped us teach the DM2 Proverbs 17-24 workshop. They did an excellent job. Oleg Gatsenko and his wife, Julia, both of whom graduated from the Bible college in Kyiv, have been such a strong support at Lviv Bible Church since they moved to Lviv from Kyiv. Yuri Chugai is a faithful servant in Greater Grace Church also located in Lviv. His wife, Nadia (pictured with him below middle) also is yet another graduate from the Bible college in Kyiv. Another man, Roman Dubinets (pictured below on the left) from still yet another local church in Lviv, has also taught with us in several DM2 workshops over the years. He taught very well this last time and is always improving in his teaching.



Back in Kyiv, after Christmas and the New Year was over, we kept up a very similar schedule as before the holidays as I taught Hebrews at the Bible college, but then we completed Proverbs 17-24 in Baryshivka, and finally finished all of 1st Corinthians at the Regeneration Church after a good year and a half. It was so good to see so many young people be so faithful at the Regeneration Church. When I return, they have asked me to start a study on the Life of Christ, something we are looking forward to!



Because of the mayhem connected to my residency, my second week at the Bible college in Kyiv was



chaotic, but I had good men to help me – Oleg Lozinsky, Zhenya Safchenko, and Sergei Yakovchuk. I was able to pass off some hours of my teaching to Oleg and Zhenya with little loss while Sergei helped me work through the Immigration office. Oleg Lozinsky (pictured below teaching Proverbs 20 in Baryshikva), who was another one of our more fruitful students at the Bible college going back to the very beginning, is now the dean of the college and the pastor of the Word of God church in Kyiv. Oleg has helped me teach Hebrews a few times in the past on our DM2 trips, and so he had little trouble filling in for me. Oleg is teaching more and more at the Bible college and also in other locales, including Armenia now too. Zhenya Safchenko of Baryshivka, is perhaps the best bible teacher the Word of God Bible College has ever produced and graduated. Zhenya is very gifted in the exposition of God’s holy word. They finished up Proverbs 17-24 in Baryshivka as originally planned. Sergei was then the bulldog I needed to knock on doors and invite ourselves into various offices at Immigration to become acquainted. Practically speaking, Sergei is also our townhouse contractor making sure the work gets done.



On our last weekend in Ukraine we returned to Dnipro (see below) to continue teaching Revelation 6-12. Not only did we have a good little group gather again and stay long hours to hear instruction from God’s word, but there was also a sizable group listening online. I was then asked to preach on Sunday at the Word of Life church in Dnipro where Pastor Andrei Chikalov pastors. Even better still, the Evangelical Free Bible Institute has now invited Jim Myers to teach them an eight-hour course on Soteriology scheduled for mid-February. As the group is opening up to Dispensational teaching, they are also opening up to strong grace teaching as well. Soteriology and grace are Jim Myer’s forte when it comes to teaching the Scriptures. As far as I know these days, no one can teach this critical subject matter any better.



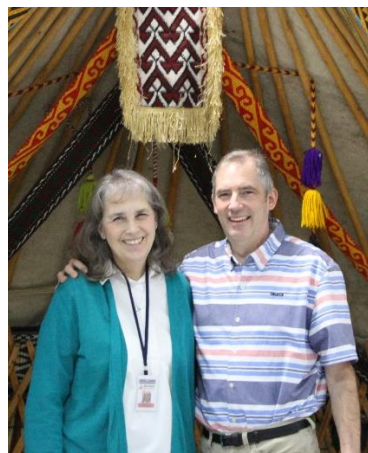
BACK IN ALMATY

Back in Kazakhstan, Caren has returned to work, and I have dived back into my doctoral studies. I need to finish my doctoral project the first week of May in order to graduate. I have been told that if I can have a rough draft ready for perusal at that time, I can graduate with a Doctor of Ministry in Theology and Apologetics from Corban University in Salem, Oregon. My doctoral project is to put together a curriculum on apologetics using Paul's famous speech in Athens from Acts 17:16-34 presented to a hardened group of philosophers and idolaters. I am now more than half way through the project as I have been making slow, but steady progress. So far so good. Please pray for this too.

Last, but not least, an open door finally has been granted even here in Almaty now at a local church more than 30 minutes away from where we live. I was given a two-hour slot last Sunday afternoon to teach Psalm 128, the Family Psalm, to a good group who gathered after services. The teaching was very well received. The pastor wants me to work into their regular rotation now for teaching opportunities, and the translator who translated for me, invited me to their English club outreach group which you can see below.

In addition, thanks to all the virus madness, the high school English and English Literature teacher at Almaty International School was not able to teach for a few days. They were so desperate they asked if I could fill in for her. With hesitation, I agreed, and so spent two days getting first-hand experience as to what is going on in the education department for high schoolers at a very high end expensive private school. The students themselves knew right away something different was going on. They also knew that I had to be a teacher of some kind from somewhere. Apparently, the students were talking to each other about the classes, and how refreshing it was where learning was interesting and fun and not boring. As we finished up the last few minutes of the last class, they finally pressed me as to where my education came from and what I do.

Please pray for our great needs in the work of the ministry! We have invested a lot in Ukraine over the years. Please pray for those investments that God would protect them during this very evil and volatile time, both spiritually and financially – including our townhouse! The plan is to move to Ukraine in June.



If you would like to begin to support us financially, or would like to continue, please make out a check to the Ararat-Rainier East-West Fellowship or AREWF, and then send it to the address below. While you are welcome to designate a particular place or location in the former Soviet Union for your donation(s), please do not list any individuals or names of people as this practice is forbidden by IRS rules.

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